



Annual Report of the  
Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse

October 2003 - September 2004

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The Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse

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## ACRONYMS

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|        |   |
|--------|---|
| BIOFOR | Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry                 |
| CTO    | Cognizant Technical Officer                           |
| DEC    | Development Experience Clearinghouse                  |
| EGAT   | Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) Bureau |
| FY     | fiscal year   |
| GIS    | geographic information systems                        |
| IQC    | indefinite quantity contract                          |
| LPA    | USAID's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs      |
| NRIC   | Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse           |
| NRM    | natural resources management                          |
| OPIN   | Online Presidential Information Network               |
| TFCA   | Tropical Forest Conservation Act                      |
| USAID  | U.S. Agency for International Development             |

## INTRODUCTION

In fiscal year (FY) 2004 (October 2003 through September 2004), the Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse (NRIC) supported the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Natural Resources Management (NRM) in its knowledge management, communication, and dissemination needs, as well as conferences and strategic planning. The NRM Office provides field support to USAID Missions and Bureaus and contributes to the development of environmental policy of the Agency and the U.S. Government overall. This annual report describes NRIC's activities over the past year.

To further these objectives, NRIC assists the NRM Office in five areas:

- 1) Research, writing and publishing reports;
- 2) Collecting and organizing information about USAID natural resources management activities and expenditures Agency-wide;
- 3) Providing improved access to these information resources through the design and production of internal and external Web pages;
- 4) Strategic planning support; and
- 5) Conference, workshops and training.

The NRIC Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist, Land and Water Specialist and the Water and Coastal Resource Specialist interact daily with their respective teams. In addition, NRIC provides staff expertise in the areas of communications products, Web production, and information management. The NRIC Director and the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) communicate regularly to determine how the NRIC core team can better serve the NRM Office and missions.

NRIC employed short-term technical assistance during FY 2004 to implement specific projects and to meet product and scheduling objectives. Short-term technical assistance totaling 481 person days was used to support: special projects related to NRM strategic planning, assessing opportunities for USAID in the Amazon Basin, and research and analysis of tourism and geographic information systems (GIS) in the Agency; design and production of Web pages and online databases; acquisition and accession of information on NRM projects, and preparation of a draft white paper addressing USAID's work in combating illegal logging in protected areas.

Highlights of NRIC's contributions to the NRM Office and Teams include:

- Assisted with researching and submission of the NRM component of the USAID Annual Report;
- Helped research, write, and produce three major thematic reports, one each on the biodiversity, forestry and water portfolios in USAID;
- Provided extensive and diverse assistance with other research, reports, and outreach;
- Helped write content and designed and produced 101 Web pages plus 25 navigation modules for three Web sites, each with different technical requirements;
- Maintained and expanded a Web-based system for the NRM Office to provide the Agency with access to key information about USAID natural resource projects; the

system includes online data entry and an operations manual detailing the data protocols.

- Researched and produced database records for 488 USAID projects with natural resources components.
- Added more than 2,200 document records (total now over 3,000) to the online library and 96 images (total now 378).
- Assisted the Office to prepare a new strategic plan.
- Initiated projects related to tourism, GIS, the Amazon Basin, and poverty reduction and NRM management.

Throughout the year, NRIC has reacted to many tasks that were not anticipated in the original work plan. These unanticipated activities accounted for perhaps 30 percent of NRIC's work in FY 2004. Unanticipated activities included research and reporting on the Global Climate Change Annual Report, the NRM Office's contribution to the USAID Title XII report on agricultural research and training, USAID's report on the Agency's contribution to the United Nation's Convention to Combat Desertification, and an overview of watershed management indicators for RCSA, Guinea. Beginning in June, the NRM Office requested NRIC assistance with five new, significant projects related to: 1) a new strategy for the NRM Office, 2) the Amazon Basin 3) USAID tourism activities, 4) USAID GIS activities, and 5) nine seminars on poverty reduction and NRM. These projects required significant planning, recruitment of technical experts, and management. While these tasks were not anticipated, it is the nature of the NRIC's work to respond on short notice to tasks within the scope of work.

## **TASK 1. RESEARCH, WRITE, AND PRODUCE REPORTS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

In FY 2004, NRIC helped the NRM Office prepare reports and other information about USAID's work in promoting natural resources management. These include a Water Team report to Congress, the Section 118: Tropical Forests report to Congress, the Section 119 Biodiversity Report, and the NRM Office's contributions to the Agency's Annual Report and Performance and Accountability Report.

In addition, NRIC assisted with several reports that were not identified in its FY 2004 work plan, such as the NRM Office's input to the Coral Reef Task Force report and Title XII report on agricultural research and training. Overall NRIC assisted in researching, writing and producing more than five reports in 2004.

### **NRM Annual Report**

Early in FY 2004, NRIC technical staff worked with the NRM teams to prepare the NRM Office's submission to the Agency's FY 2003 Annual Report. NRIC collected and analyzed performance data from the teams' partners and helped collect and analyze value added data from the teams. In addition, NRIC prepared guidance for the teams in drafting their individual components of the report and worked with team members in entering their team's component into the Annual Report Application. Finally, NRIC coordinated and helped draft the office-level components of the report and enter the office-level components into the Annual Report Application.

### **Section 118: Tropical Forests Report**

The Foreign Assistance Act recognizes the importance of forests, and tropical forests in particular. It states that "in providing assistance to developing countries, the President shall ... place a high priority on conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests." Through Section 118 of the Act, Congress mandates that USAID must produce an annual report on its activities and expenditures related to tropical forests.

NRIC worked with the Forestry Team to produce the 2003 Section 118: Tropical Forests Report to Congress. The report describes FY 2003 USAID forestry activities, current priority themes in forestry, funding levels for USAID forestry activities, and provides an analysis of USAID funding trends in tropical forestry during the past 17 years.

NRIC worked closely with the Forestry Team to write and produce this report. NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist helped research and write the report. Forestry Team staff provided information about funding levels and conducted the analysis of funding trends. Five drafts of the report were prepared by NRIC and reviewed by the Forestry Team as well as by NRM Office and USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) management.

This year, NRIC worked with the Forestry and Biodiversity teams to streamline the gathering of information from USAID missions for the Section 118: Tropical Forests and Section 119:

Biodiversity Conservation reports. One initial request was sent to the missions for an update on USAID's country and regional activities in both biodiversity and forestry.

Five hundred copies of the report were printed in June. The report was posted on [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov), and copies were sent to USAID Missions with environmental activities and to key members of Congress.

## **Section 119: Biodiversity Conservation Report**

NRIC worked with the Biodiversity Team to gather information, write descriptions of USAID biodiversity programs, and produce the report. The 84-page report includes program highlights of current biodiversity activities, a funding overview, and annexes. The report was published in August and posted on USAID's public Web site. Copies were sent to USAID missions with environment activities and to key members of Congress.

## **Integrated Water Resources Management Reporting**

At the request of Congress, the NRM Office's Water Team produced a report on the status of USAID drinking water activities around the world in FY 2004. This report describes how USAID has invested \$100 million earmarked by Congress in FY 2004 for drinking water supply and sanitation-related activities directed toward improving human health across the globe. NRIC helped write and produce 1,000 copies. A digital version of the report was posted on USAID's public Web site in April 2004.

## **Other Communications / Outreach Products and Activities**

Throughout the year, NRIC produced several unscheduled quick-response products for the NRM Office and Teams, including:

### ***Technical Reporting***

- Forestry Team submission to the Global Climate Change Annual Report;
- NRM Office's contribution to the USAID Title XII report on agricultural research and training;
- USAID's report on the Agency's contribution to the United Nations' Convention to Combat Desertification;
- USAID's component of the multi-agency Coral Reef Task Force Report;
- AIS sheets for Biodiversity Team;
- OPIN FY 2004 Midterm Report;
- OPIN Data FY 2003-2004 Summary on the Water for the Poor Signature Initiative;
- General Accounting Office Engagement Report on Freshwater Infrastructure;
- FY 2005 Water Obligations;
- Overview of watershed management indicators for USAID's Regional Center for Southern Africa, Guinea.

### ***Other Products***

- CD-Roms of USAID's report "Enduring Legacy in Natural Forests";
- AIS sheets for Biodiversity Team: Belize, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands;



- Information on Sava Lacandon for NRM Office Director;
- Reports mailed to USAID Missions: *USAID Investments in Drinking Water Supply Projects and Related Activities in 2004, Foreign Assistance Act Section 118 Report: Tropical Forests, and Biodiversity Conservation*.
- Participation at the EGAT-wide Communications and Knowledge Management team meetings.

#### ***Outreach Materials***

- Draft ambassador kit, containing reports and other materials produced by the NRM Office and teams; and
- Fifteen news articles for EGAT's Intranet home page describing the NRM Office's activities and successes in promoting natural resources management around the world.

## **TASK 2. COLLECT AND MANAGE INFORMATION FOR THE NRM OFFICE AND TEAMS**

To assist the NRM Office and teams with strategic planning and with reporting requirements, NRIC collects and organizes information about natural resources activities and expenditures Agency-wide, and about NRM staff activities in support of these activities. Research by NRIC provides the Teams with information needed for specific applications.

### **Tracking Activities and Expenditures for the Water Team**

In April of 2004, NRIC added a staff specialist to work specifically with the Water Team. The Water and Coastal Resource Specialist continued data gathering and tracking of information about USAID water expenditures and activities, just as she had for another contractor during the past four years.

### **NRM Staff Activity Logs**

NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist continued tracking Forestry Team member activities. The activity log tracks conferences attended, services provided to Missions and/or other Bureaus within USAID, and other important accomplishments. The information supports planning and reporting requirements of the Forestry Team.

## TASK 3. DESIGN, PRODUCE, AND MAINTAIN WEB SITES

For FY 2004, NRIC added significant content to public and internal Web pages for the NRM Office. Continued maintenance was performed on a cyclical basis for all NRIC-produced Web sites and pages.

### USAID's Public Site ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov))

In FY 2004, 41 pages and 18 navigation modules were revised or newly added to USAID's public Web site. Many of these pages went through multiple revisions, including photo insertions. Before posting to the live site, changes and development of these pages were reviewed and approved by the NRM Teams and USAID's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA). In addition, the "What's New" modules for NRM thematic sector pages were changed as needed to highlight new activities and/or publications (i.e., Forestry 118, Forestry "Lessons Learned" reports, Water Congressional Report, Biodiversity 119 Report). Reports posted on this site are all Section 508-compliant.

| Thematic Sector | FY2003            |                        | FY2004                              |                                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                 | HTML Content page | HTML Navigation module | HTML Content page                   | HTML Navigation module             |
| Biodiversity    | 1                 | 0                      | 21                                  | 6                                  |
| Forestry        | 4                 | 5                      | 17<br>(including 12 in development) | 12<br>(including 5 in development) |
| Land Management | 1                 | 3                      | 2                                   | 2                                  |
| Water           | 12                | 3                      | 13                                  | 3                                  |
| <b>Total:</b>   | <b>18</b>         | <b>11</b>              | <b>53</b>                           | <b>23</b>                          |

At EGAT's request, NRIC developed content from the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) FY 2003 annual report, individual country-funded websites, and content from a defunct website on a CD-ROM. Currently, 12 new pages and 5 associated navigation modules about the TFCA are on NRIC's development site pending final approval.

In FY 2005, NRIC anticipates updating and adding pages for the NRM Office and all Teams, and in particular adding significant content about land activities and programs to the USAID public Web site. Information on the NRM/Poverty Reduction seminar series, and about GIS and Sustainable Tourism activities in USAID may also be added to increase the NRM Office's public web presence.

### EGAT's Intranet Site

Managers of the EGAT Intranet, the NRM Office and NRIC staff agreed on a process for submitting updates and new pages to the EGAT Bureau Intranet. Following review and approval of content by the NRM Office, NRIC submits all pages to USAID's TechHub for posting, except for changes to the Users Guide, which are submitted to the EGAT Webmaster for posting. Based on this accord, NRIC worked with the NRM Office to update the Office and team pages, its staff directory, contract mechanisms, and support agreements managed by the NRM Office on EGAT's Intranet.

A total of 44 HTML pages and 13 associated navigation modules introducing the NRM Office, its four Teams, User Guide pages, and staff directories of core and extended Team members were submitted for posting on EGAT's Intranet. The table below illustrates the breakdown.

| <b>EGAT Intranet pages</b> | <b>HTML Content pages</b> | <b>HTML Navigation Modules</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| NRM Office                 | 1                         | 3                              |
| Biodiversity               | 1                         | 3                              |
| Forestry                   | 1                         | 3                              |
| Land                       | 1                         | 1                              |
| Water                      | 1                         | 1                              |
| User Guide                 | 31                        | N/A                            |
| Staff Directory            | 8                         | 2                              |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>44</b>                 | <b>13</b>                      |

Users Guide pages for 18 agreements were submitted to the EGAT Webmaster for posting, including: the GreenCOM indefinite quantity contract (IQC), Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry (BIOFOR) IQC, and the Water IQC; interagency agreements with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Cooperative Research Support Programs for Soils, Integrated Pest Management, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, and Pond Dynamics/Aquaculture; a cooperative agreement for Coast Resources Management, and the Leader With Associates award for the Global Conservation Program. In addition, 13 pages were produced describing how to access the Raise IQC and the Water IQC.

In addition, NRIC provided 15 news articles with photos for posting on the home page of the EGAT Intranet.

The NRIC Cognizant Technical Officer, NRIC's Director, Webmaster, and Editor met twice with USAID staff and the supporting contractor for EGAT's Office of Environment Science Policy to begin developing a more unified "environment face" on EGAT's Intranet, including cross-linking between Web pages. Attendees agreed to start with cross-office collaboration on the Users Guide.

NRIC will continue to support the NRM Office and its respective Teams in updating current pages and developing additional content and news articles on EGAT's intranet. Training material may be added to the Intranet, and NRIC anticipates converting the User Guide pages once the new format is completed and approved.

#### **NRIC.net Website**

The NRM online library ([www.nric.net](http://www.nric.net)) went live in May 2004. The site is designed to give the public access to information about USAID natural resources projects and associated documents. Currently, it remains unpublicized until NRIC receives more feedback from within USAID. Content for this site is described under Task 4 below. On each search page, there are clickable maps for directing geographic searches. All of the search pages include links for users to submit project information and documents to NRIC and USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.

Prior to its launch, LPA reviewed the site, and determined that the site meets LPA's technical guidelines for external USAID-funded websites.

In the last quarter of FY 2004, the NRIC site was expanded to include pages devoted to the new NRM/Poverty Reduction seminar series. Jointly sponsored by EGAT's Office of Natural Resources Management and Office of Poverty Reduction, the seminars will occur between October 2004 and March 2005. The seminar pages on the site include a description of the series and individual seminars, a schedule, a registration form, reading lists, and biographical information of the speakers. The registration form is a Microsoft Word document that participants can complete and email back to the conference facilitators. In addition, NRIC designed a unique masthead for the seminar pages to visually separate the seminar series from the rest of the site. A total of 22 pages were written, approved by both EGAT offices, and posted.

In the upcoming fiscal year, NRIC will periodically update the site to improve search capabilities, particularly regarding USAID sustainable tourism and GIS activities and the NRM/Poverty Reduction seminar series.

#### **Demonstrations and Presentations**

In October, NRIC participated in the EGAT Communication Task Force meeting by giving a presentation on issues involved in making Section 508(c)(3)-compliant PDFs. The presentation included a demonstration of what a blind person hears when s/he uses a screen reader to navigate through a PDF document. The NRIC Webmaster attended the 2003 IDEAS Section 508 compliance 3-day conference in November.

As part of a communication endeavor and to solicit feedback, the NRIC Director gave a web and database presentation to the NRM Office in January. In March, he demonstrated the development site of [www.nric.net](http://www.nric.net) to the EGAT Communications/Knowledge Management Task Force.

#### **USAIDwater.org (Water Team website for World Water Forum 3)**

Designed for the Water Team in FY 2003, this website will expire in FY 2005. During the past year, the information on the site was incorporated into the Water thematic pages on USAID's public site and on EGAT's Intranet.

## TASK 4. ACQUIRE, ORGANIZE, AND ARCHIVE INFORMATION RESOURCES

In FY 2004, NRIC continued to collect and update information on USAID NRM projects and related documents, and refine access to that information. Three components combine to continue building the foundation of the Information Clearinghouse:

- 1) Acquiring and updating information,
- 2) Refining the database infrastructure and documenting procedures for data management, and
- 3) Marketing the online library and tools to USAID staff and constituents.

Each of these components will evolve as the NRM Office and NRIC identify additional informational needs.

### Information Collection

The collection of information has been a two-pronged effort: compiling and updating the NRM online library with project information about USAID's NRM activities around the world since 2000, and collaborating with USAID's main information clearinghouse (CDIE/Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)) to help build up DEC holdings related to USAID NRM projects.

During the past year, NRIC collected baseline information dating back to 2000 for USAID NRM projects or projects with an NRM component, including global, regional, and local projects across the Agency and around the world. The database now includes 488 records for USAID NRM projects active anytime from 2000 through 2003 (and some more recent), citations to more than 3,000 documents, and links to documents available from DEC for NRM projects.

Late in FY 2004, NRIC began a systematic process for updating the project information. This started in Latin America and the Caribbean with the Amazon Basin countries to prepare for the Amazon Basin Initiative. The process will be extended to cover all of Latin America and the Caribbean, then Africa, Asia and the Near East, and Europe and Eurasia, and will continue on an annual basis to ensure that project information remains up to date.

The database was expanded to include more in-depth information about projects related to sustainable tourism and GIS in USAID, thereby permanently capturing the project information resulting from NRIC research on these topics.

Other activities related to information collection for the library include:

- The images component of the database now totals 378. During the next fiscal year, NRIC will devote resources to systematically expanding this collection.
- NRIC helped draft and format a land resources resource inventory (bibliography & web) for the Land Resources Management Team.
- NRIC met with CDIE to build collaboration for increasing submission of NRM project documents.

## **Improving and Documenting Database Structure and Function**

In FY 2003, NRIC began working on the NRM Office's online library, maintaining the library through a custom database. In the first half of FY 2004, NRIC continued to develop and test the database and worked to complete the development and testing of a website to make the database accessible online. The site ([www.nric.net](http://www.nric.net)) went live in May 2004.

In addition, NRIC designed and produced a parallel, but quite distinct Web site for entering, editing, and managing the database. Thus, the information is not only accessible by Internet, but the data are also compiled and managed online.

Finally, NRIC completed a manual for data management. The manual includes sections on how to search, for those using the public site, how to enter and maintain project and document records for NRIC information managers, and how to maintain the database and web page systems for Information Management Specialist. Furthermore, the programming is highly annotated to facilitate maintenance of the coding by anyone familiar with ColdFusion. The operations manual and the program annotations will continue to expand and evolve as procedures are continually refined.

## **Marketing the Library and Tools**

To gain feedback and begin selective marketing of the NRM Office's online library, a number of presentations and demonstrations were given to select persons and groups, including: the NRM Office; the EGAT Communications and Knowledge Management Task Force; USAID staff, NGOs, and contractors in Panama; and contractors in the Washington D.C. area.

## TASK 5. PLANNING

In FY 2004, NRIC worked with the NRM Office and Teams on the NRM Office's strategic framework, which grew from the Office retreat in April, and an opportunities assessment to help the NRM Office and Latin America and Caribbean Regional Bureau develop a conservation strategy for the Amazon Basin.

### **NRM Office's Strategic Framework**

Following the NRM Office's retreat in April 2004, where the need for a strategic framework for the Office was identified, NRIC worked with NRM staff toward developing this framework. NRIC hired a senior planning expert, who interviewed, compiled, and analyzed information from USAID staff and partners. The team worked intensely with a small group from the NRM Office to prepare a five-year strategy (2005-2009) for the Office. The reports included decision-making guidance for the Office vision, a proposed new strategic objective and framework, four intermediate results, and steps for the future.

### **Amazon Basin Opportunity Assessment**

In the fourth quarter, the NRM Office began a collaborative effort with the LAC Bureau to define a regional conservation strategy for the Amazon Basin. The strategy was requested by Congress to guide a new regional, Basin-wide initiative. As a first step in developing a regional strategy, NRIC is preparing an assess opportunities through a highly participatory consultation with stakeholders. NRIC hired a team leader with more than 25 years experience in scientific research and public policy in the Amazon Basin, and a biodiversity specialist with expertise in biodiversity, environmental law, and policy issues in Latin America to lead the opportunities assessment team. NRIC staff also participated on the team. The team is identifying themes and geographic areas relevant to biodiversity-related issues in the region, gathered literature and analyzed background documents to reveal USAID's regional context, and took a 3-week trip to Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil to meet with USAID mission staff, government counterparts, implementing partners, and other donors.

In the first quarter of FY 2005, the team will analyze the information gathered to identify opportunities for USAID in the Amazon Basin and produce a report on the Opportunities Assessment. USAID will subsequently write its "Amazon Conservation Strategy," and NRIC will assist with production.



## **TASK 6. ASSISTING WITH CONFERENCES, TRAINING, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Conferences and workshops play an important role in the information exchange and enhanced communication among NRM practitioners within the Agency and among USAID's partners. Throughout the year, NRIC helped the NRM Office and Teams facilitate workshops and supported Team members' participation in conferences. In FY 2004, the NRM Office began three major initiatives that include conferences and meetings: sustainable tourism and GIS in USAID, and NRM/poverty reduction seminar series.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

In FY 2004, the NRM Office began work on a sustainable tourism initiative. The initiative involves three phases:

- 1) Research and reports about USAID's work in sustainable tourism, resulting in a concept paper.
- 2) Communication about that work, including preparation of case studies, presentations at the World Tourism Organization conference in October 2004, and web page development for USAID's internal web site.
- 3) Development of training modules and manual for USAID staff wanting to tourism design and manage tourism projects.

To assist the NRM Office, NRIC hired a sustainable tourism expert and support staff, with several NRIC core staff also assisting with planning, technical input, and logistics. Research was conducted, and the Phase I concept report was completed. Work on the case studies was begun, including site visit to Jamaica, and preparation of materials for the October conference was started.

### **Geographic Information Systems**

During the past three years, the NRM Office has been working to develop and support a more systematic approach to use of GIS and geospatial information within the Agency. Late in FY 2004, the Land Resources Management Team requested that NRIC research and write a report describing the use of GIS by the Agency, and share the results through the NRIC Web pages and in a conference schedule for early 2005. NRIC has hired a senior GIS expert with experience in USAID and support staff to accomplish this work.

### **Poverty Reduction and Natural Resources Management Seminar Series**

In FY 2004, the NRM Office began collaborating with EGAT's Office of Poverty Reduction to hold seminars on poverty reduction and natural resources management. NRIC helped draft seminar materials for review and arrange for speakers, and designed and produced web pages about the seminar series that included a digital registration form. The web pages are hosted on [www.nric.net](http://www.nric.net).

### **Other**

NRIC assisted the NRM Office and teams with other conferences and meetings, including:

- NRIC updated and printed materials and assembled display materials for the September U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting in Florida (meeting postponed to December due to hurricanes).
- NRIC helped the Biodiversity Team with Global Conservation Program meetings.

In FY 2004, NRIC assisted the NRM office with its marketing and dissemination efforts, with nine news articles on the NRM Office and Teams' activities, including: technical and contractual assistance to Missions; participation at conferences, workshops, and other meetings; and published reports.

## TASK 7. NRIC PROJECT PLANNING, MONITORING, AND REPORTING

Planning, monitoring, and reporting on NRIC operations are continuous processes, with each phase of evaluation leading to improvements in the levels of assistance provided to the NRM Office and its four teams.

NRIC submitted its FY 2004 Annual Work Plan and budget to USAID in November 2003. The plan detailed, to the extent known, NRIC's anticipated schedule of products and activities on behalf of the NRM Office. The Annual Work Plan provided the basis for quarterly reports describing activities and work performed by NRIC. Quarterly reports were submitted to USAID at the end of each quarter. The proposed NRIC FY 2005 Annual Work Plan and budget were submitted to USAID in September 2004.

In FY 2004, NRIC underwent significant staffing changes. NRIC expanded its core staff with the addition of a Senior Water Technical Advisor. To assist with the NRM Office's special initiatives in tourism, GIS, and the Amazon Basin, as well as the NRM Office's strategic framework, ten short-term technical experts were hired, including a projects manager to oversee several special initiatives and senior specialists with expertise in tourism, strategic planning, the Amazon Basin, and GIS. These specialists were supported by short-term mid- and junior-level staff.

NRIC's Director and sector specialists continued to participate regularly in the routinely scheduled meetings of the NRM Office and Teams. In addition, NRIC participated at the NRM Office retreat in April 2004, and has participated in numerous *ad hoc* meetings.

NRIC staff attended NRM Team retreats throughout the year, and participated in monthly EGAT Communications Task Force meetings.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

This information has been deliberately omitted from this version.